(c) whether Government has taken up the matter with the appropriate authority to get the Indian citizens released from the custody of Somali pirates; and

(d) if so, the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are two Indian nationals on the board the vessel.

(c) and (d) The Directorate General of Shipping has requested the owners of the vessel to keep them informed about the position of the vessel, welfare of the crew members and status of negotiations with hijackers. As per information received, the hijacked vessel has reached the Somali coast close to Hobyo in Central Somalia and the owners are negotiating with the pirates for the safe release of the crew members.

Brahmaputra River as a National Waterways

2150. SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state the actions so far taken to make the Brahmaputra River as National Waterway, a decision which was taken earlier?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI MUKUL ROY): Sadiya-Dhubri stretch of river Brahmaputra has already been declared as a National Waterway with effect from 26.12.1988 and it is being developed and maintained by Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) for shipping and navigation. IWAI is developing and maintaining inland water transport infrastructure namely navigation channel, terminals and navigational aids for day/night navigation. Navigational channel with least available depth of 2.0 m from Dhubri to Dibrugrah (768 km) and 1.5 m from Dibrugrah to Sadiya (123 km) is being maintained for about 330 days in a year; a low level RCC jetty has been constructed at Pandu, a high level jetty is under construction. Floating terminals have been provided at Dhubri, Jogighopa, Tejpur, Silghat, Jamuguri, Neamati and Dibrugarh; one container crane, 5 floating cranes and 2 shore cranes have been provided, day navigation marks are maintained in the entire waterway and 24 hours navigational aids have also been provided between Dhubri and Dibrugrah (768 km).

Vessel Traffic Monitoring System Authority

2151. SHRI PARSHOTTAM KHODABHAI RUPALA:
SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Vessel Traffic Monitoring System (VTMS) is being set up in Gulf of Kutch, and whether the project has been completed;

(b) if so, whether the exercise for regulating the shipping traffic has been started;

(c) if not, the reasons for the delay; and

(d) by when the project would be completed?

12.00 P.M.

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN): (a) and (b) The establishment of the Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) for regulating the shipping traffic in the Gulf of Kutch has not yet been completed.

(c) The delay is due to the remoteness of sites and slow progress of civil engineering works.

(d) The re-scheduled date for completion of the project is 31.3.2010.

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(MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

I. Report and Accounts (2008-09) of EPL, Chennai and related papers.

II. Reports and Accounts (2008-09) of various Dock Labour Boards and related papers.

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN): Sir, I lay on the Table;

I. A copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following papers, under sub-section (1) of Section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:

(a) Ninth Annual Report and Accounts of the Ennore Port Limited (EPL), Chennai, for the year 2008-09, together with the Auditor's Report on the Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India thereon.

(b) Review by Government on the working of the above Company.

[Placed in Library. *See* No.L.T. 1046/15/09]

II. A copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following papers, under Section 5(E) of the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act, 1948:

(a) Fifty-eighth Administration Report and Annual Accounts of the erstwhile Bombay Dock Labour Board (Ex-BDLB), Mumbai, for the year 2008-09, together with the Auditor's Report on the Accounts.

[Placed in Library. *See* No.L.T. 1270/15/09]

(b) Forty-eighth Administration Report and Annual Accounts of the Visakhapatnam Dock Labour Board (VDLB), Visakhapatnam, for the year 2008-09, together with the Auditors Report on the Accounts.

(c) Review by Government on the working of the above Boards.

[Placed in Library. *See* No.L.T. 1271/15/09]